

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

YOU MUST SEE A WRONG TO REALIZE IT

"Margie," said Paula, "I wish I did not have to tell you what happened that memorable night in Philadelphia. In the next few hours I changed from a foolishly trusting girl to a saddened woman who believed in nothing, had confidence in no one.

"We lingered at table and Earnest repeated, 'What sacrifice would you—could you make for me, you baby child?' His hand closed over mine regardless of anyone in the dining room that might be looking our way.

"I answered the convulsive pressure and said, 'I would and will make any sacrifice for the man I love.'

"God help me, Margie, I thought I meant it, for notwithstanding all the lust I had seen masquerading as love since I had been alone in the world I still dreamed that my love and my lover were of divinity itself.

"Before we could say more, Ruth Dayton brought a critic from one of the afternoon papers over to our table and in a few minutes I excused myself and went up to my room.

"As it does to all right-thinking young girls, a declaration of love meant to me marriage only and I began to plan for it while I was getting ready for bed.

"Oh, mother mine, I wish you could know that your little girl is perfectly happy tonight," I said softly to myself. Margie, I almost seemed to feel the silent benediction of my mother's hands upon my brow—and caught her oft-repeated 'Good night and God bless you.'

"I had almost passed from these sweetest of waking dreams, in which the two people I loved—my dead mother and my living sweetheart—were all mixed up, into my usual dreamless sleep, when I heard the occupant of the other room come in.

"For some reason I felt every nerve alert and wide awake in a moment. The man closed the outside door softly and evidently walked over to

the connecting door between our rooms. He listened a moment—a moment in which I could feel my heart beat furiously—and then there came a discreet tapping.

"It was so faint that only for its continuation I might have thought my foolish fears were making me give a sinister meaning to a perfectly innocent, though to me unexplainable, noise.

"Then, as I again heard the tapping—a little louder this time—I took courage and slowly tiptoed to the door. Then I drew a long silent breath for the bolt was shot into place just as Ruth had left it.

"But my heart stopped again as I heard the bolt slip on the other side of the door and saw the knob slowly turn.

"What if my bolt did not hold,' I thought. Thank God it did, and I heard a smothered, whispered exclamation that sounded very profane.

"Again came the tapping—much louder and more insistent this time. I imagined all sorts of terrible things—all the horrible accounts of hotel robberies and murders I had ever read came into my head and then the blessed thought that Ruth was just across the hall came to me and sent the blood racing back to my heart.

"I tried to think whether I should reach for the telephone and call the office or open my outside door and try and awaken Ruth. Like all women I hated to make a scene of this kind—hated to have my name coupled with the sensational story that I knew would be impossible to keep out of the papers if I made a public fuss.

"All at once it came to me that by this time Earnest must be in his room, for it was nearly three o'clock. 'I'll call him on the phone,' I said to myself and he will settle this thing immediately.

"The tapping had become loudly